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Horatian Roots in Fray Luis's Garden: Imagery and Meaning in the 'Vida retirada'

Fray Luis's Horatianism is well established in Spanish letters; however, the familiar epithet disguises an imprecision, leaving us with what Henry Ettinghausen has termed 'un "horacianismo" mal definido' which is considered primarily in terms of formal resemblances (1996: 252). This study seeks to develop Ettinghausen's suggestion that we may also see a more thematic influence of Horace on Fray Luis, through a recalibration of the 'Horatianism' of the 'Vida retirada', which will lead to a new reading of the poem, based on parallels with certain passages of Horace's *Odes*. However, critical discussion of Horatian echoes in Fray Luis's first poem has focused predominantly on its interaction with Horace's second *Epode*, and accordingly it is with an attempt to reframe the question of that poem's influence that I begin.

The extent of the influence of 'Beatus ille' has given rise to much debate, but as recently as 2009 Isabel Uría Maqua was able to call it the 'modelo fundamental' for the Spaniard's poem (2009: 38), and the shared theme of the praise of country life is clear to see. However, we note immediately that the city-dweller's busy life to which this rural idyll is opposed in Horace remains absent from the 'Vida retirada'. Moreover, this is far from the only detail which distances Fray Luis's poem from his supposed Horatian model: Patrick Gallagher, for example, draws attention to the thematic preoccupation with wealth and power that so dominates the Spaniard's ode, yet features only in passing details in that of his Roman forebear (1969: 148–49). We might add a similar disparity in the focus of the imagery: the bulk of Fray Luis's poem consists in an opposition between the image of the *huerto* (or parts thereof) and that of the sea and those who travel it; again, while similar images occur fleetingly in the Latin poem, neither is developed at length, and the precedent as we find it there is not sufficient to shed meaningful light on Fray Luis's practice, as I will argue that the interaction between these two images is an essential guide for understanding the Spaniard's poem. More generally, too, as Colin Thompson has pointed out (1996: 552–53), there is an important difference in tone: Horace's ironic ending undercuts what had seemed a pressing desire on Alfius's

part to leave for the country, as he fails completely to act on this apparent desire, instead taking the first available opportunity to return to business; this irony is a long way from the idealistic sincerity, or, with Patrick Gallagher (1969: 154), the moralizing tone that we may see in Fray Luis's poem. The direct link to 'Beatus ille', it seems, cannot be the full story of Fray Luis's retreat.

These difficulties need not imply that the relevance of Horace's poem should be dismissed out of hand, but they do suggest that the nature of the relationship between the two poems might be explored in more detail. An important clue to this relationship is provided by the final difference of tone noted above, where despite modern consensus regarding the irony with which Horace's portrayal of Alfius is laced, the situation is complicated by an alternative reading of the Roman poem that had some currency in the sixteenth century, according to which the bulk of the *Epode* should indeed be taken as sincere praise of the countryside. This was the reading of some of the foremost contemporary commentators, including the great French scholar Lambinus, who notes that the moneylender Alfius is clearly no typical country-dweller, but takes this as further proof of the great appeal of country life, since even a man like Alfius is moved to praise it, despite proving ultimately unable to enjoy its tranquil charms.¹ An awareness of this prominent interpretation, allied to some details of how Horace's poem was printed and read in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, may then suggest a more adequate view of what this poem meant to the Renaissance. Significantly, interpretation of the *Epode* as authentic exordium of rustic life was not confined to intricate footnotes: sixteenth-century commentators on Horace's works typically print his lyric poems with short titles, which might give the poem's addressee, specify the type of poem in question, or summarize its theme; in the case of the second *Epode*, this title is almost invariably given as 'vitae

¹ 'oftenditque tantam esse vitae rusticae iucunditatem, & opportunitatem, ut etiam homines ab hac alienissimi, eam laudare cogantur: qui tamen lucri dulcedine, & fordibus irretiti, eius suavitatem gustare non possint' [and it shows that the pleasure and advantage of country life are so great that even men who are completely alien to it are compelled to praise it: men who nevertheless are ensnared by sweet lucre, and by greed, and are unable to enjoy the sweetness of that life] (1561: 417). (I have transcribed all quotations of early commentaries on Horace from copies held by the Bodleian Library, Oxford, or available online. All translations from Latin are my own, except in the case of Horace's *Odes*, for which I reproduce the translations contained in West [1995, 1998, 2002].)

rusticae laudes' [praises of rustic life], or a slight variation containing that phrase.² Even more strikingly, and unusually for Horace's poems, several separate, single-volume commentaries devoted solely to 'Beatus ille' are printed, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, all of whose titles read 'de laudibus vitae rusticae'. That such an apparently broad, general title comes to be used repeatedly in stand-alone volumes to identify a specific poem of Horace is a telling indication of the extent to which this theme was identified with 'Beatus ille'.

However, we may go still further. The crucial phrase 'vitae rusticae laudes' has a tendency to recur not only in titles, but also in commentators' introductory notes to the poem, or comments on its opening lines.³ This is then often followed by reference to a kindred passage in Virgil: namely, his praise of the husbandman at the close of *Georgics* 2 (ll. 458–540); significantly, these lines open with an address to the farmers as 'O fortunatos', and so Virgil's and Horace's lines are linked not only by what Renaissance commentators took to be their common theme, but also by their opening with a prominent *makarismos*, a poetic calling-card that binds the passages more tightly together.⁴ However, this practice of adducing other *laudes ruris*, to be considered alongside Horace's, proliferates remarkably as more commentaries are written, as many Latin works by both ancient and Renaissance authors are also cited in these introductory notes, precisely on the basis of their shared

² This, for example, is the title given by Lambinus (1561: 411). Variations are such as those found in Mancinellus, whose commentary compilation was often reprinted throughout the sixteenth century, and titles the poem 'Secunda Ode dicolos distrophos rusticae vitae laudes continet' [Second Ode, in 'dicolos distrophos' (a metre featuring two different types of verse within each two-line stanza), containing praises of rustic life] (1494: Cxliii'), or Stephanus's edition, which reads: 'Varias vitae rusticae laudes haec ode complectitur: praefertim verò ab animi tranquillitate eam laudat' [This ode covers various praises of rustic life, which it especially praises on the basis of the tranquillity of the soul] (1602: 112).

³ See, for example, Mancinellus (1494: Cxlii'–Cxliiii'); Weitzius (1625: 8).

⁴ Indeed, such *makarismoi* are relatively frequent in poems written in this tradition: these Virgilian lines contain further examples in 'felix qui potuit' (l. 490) and 'fortunatus et ille' (l. 493), while Garcilaso uses a similar tactic at *Égloga* 2.38 ('Cuán bienaventurado'), to mark the beginning of another passage associated with this theme, whose relevance I discuss below. Fray Luis himself does similar at XVII.46, 'Dichoso el que jamás ni ley, ni fuero', recalling the phrasing of the opening to his translation of 'Beatus ille' ('Dichoso el que de pleitos alejado'), and the passage is also linked by Ramajo Caño to these same poems of Horace and Virgil, as well as to the passage of Garcilaso just mentioned (2006: 112–13). However, this is not simply a secular tradition, as an opening *makarismos* must surely also call to mind the first Psalm (for the relevance of which to Fray Luis's poem, see Thompson, 1988: 234–37).

theme of rustic exordium.⁵ This practice constitutes important evidence for how learned readers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries approached Horace's second *Epode*: the unusual lavishing of such attention on the poem is testament to its prominence in the literary consciousness of the age; but the repeated tendency to begin discussion of it by comparing other works on a similar theme suggests that it was not only thought significant as a work in itself, but also considered the paradigm of a long tradition of writing in praise of rustic life. To the Renaissance reader, then, a reference to 'Beatus ille' does not simply call to mind the seventy lines which comprise that *Epode*; rather it may well also evoke a long tradition of writing still current at the time, of which Horace's poem was taken to be emblematic.

Such a conception of 'Beatus ille' must inevitably have coloured poetic interaction with it, and in the case of Fray Luis an attempt to account for this may suggest a truer model for his relationship with his poetic forebears. Returning to the 'Vida retirada': where alternative classical sources to 'Beatus ille' have been sought, those most widely referenced are Garcilaso's loose imitation of Horace in his *Égloga segunda* (ll. 38–76); a speech of Hippolytus, from Seneca's *Phaedra* (ll. 483–564); and the first elegy of Tibullus (see especially Gallagher, 1969; Davies, 1964; Sarmiento, 1970). As has been clearly pointed out, it is true that all three influence, at least, Fray Luis's choices of phrasing, and the more moralizing tone of Garcilaso and Seneca is an important development that brings us closer to the Leonine ode. However, what best accounts for their presence in his mind at all is their similar focus on the favoured retreat to the country, and all these passages owe some debt to the *Epode* of Horace.⁶ Fray Luis's allusions to these particular models are thus far from

⁵ Examples abound, ranging from ancient works such as [Virgil], *Culex* to more contemporary writers, such as Poliziano in his 'Rusticus'. However, near ubiquitous are a passage from Cicero, *Cato Maior de Senectute* XVI.56, and the *Georgics* passage already noted, which is in one case even printed in its entirety, to facilitate comparison with Horace (see Manutius, 1586: 45–48).

⁶ Garcilaso's debt to Horace here has long been acknowledged; moreover, Morros's notes *ad loc.* that Garcilaso blends imitation of Horace with reminiscences of the Virgilian and Senecan passages noted above strengthen the view offered here, that these models recognizably belong to a clearly-defined poetic tradition (see Garcilaso, 2007: 227). For Tibullan echoes of Horace, see, for example, l. 25 'iam modo, iam possim' and *Epode* 2.68 'iam iam futurus rusticus', or the shade and the river in the *locus amoenus* (ll. 27–28 with *Epode* 2.23–25; cf. Maltby [2002: 130–31]). For Seneca, see perhaps the 'leves ... somnos' of ll. 510–11 and *Epode*

coincidental: they reflect his awareness that he is not engaged here in direct imitation, but stands in a long imitative tradition, through which the *Epode* is now inevitably mediated, following what seems to have been a common approach to Horace's poem. Indeed, that Fray Luis himself subscribed to this view is also suggested by his translation of the *Epode*: we might naturally expect this to be his most direct engagement with Horace's original, yet even here other mediating influences may be discerned. This point has been made by Gallagher (1969: 146–47), in his analysis of ll. 25–26:⁷

El agua en las acequias corre, y cantan
los pájaros sin dueño;

for which the Latin translated reads:

labuntur altis interim ripis aquae,
queruntur in silvis aves (ll. 25–26).

[meanwhile, the waters glide between their high banks,
birds warble in the woods]

Vital here is the idea of Fray Luis's birds being 'sin dueño', for which there is no parallel in Horace's Latin; instead, this is surely a reminiscence of Garcilaso's famous birds at *Égloga* 2.67–69, whose unlearned song will itself be heard again in 'Vida retirada', l. 36 ('con su cantar sabroso no aprendido'). Garcilaso's lines read as follows:

y las aves sin dueño
con canto no aprendido
hinchén el aire de dulce armonía

These, then, are lines to which Fray Luis will return, but it is significant that their influence may be felt not only in the Augustinian's original composition, but also in his translation. However, this need

2.28, but Seneca's debt to Virgil may also be keenly felt in this passage, alongside reminiscences of Ovid, as prompted by the details of the Golden Age.

⁷ Quotations from Fray Luis's poetry are taken from Ramajo Caño (2006).

not simply be evidence for a curious primacy of Garcilaso's text over Horace's; instead, we might take it as further corroboration of the situation outlined above: that even in his most direct engagement with 'Beatus ille', Fray Luis's mind is not just on Horace's Latin, but on the literary tradition which it was taken to represent. These lines, then, would remain in-keeping with what has been seen to be familiar practice in reading the *Epode*, and the relevance of this practice for how poetic responses to that work were conceived is surely not limited to the writing of Fray Luis alone. However, while this model may explain the apparently loose link between the 'Vida retirada' and 'Beatus ille' itself, it does not account for what sets the Augustinian's poem apart from others in this vein. The key to this, I submit, lies in Horatian imitation of a different kind.

'Vida retirada' opens with the familiar motif of a flight from worldly concerns, and the 'tumult of the soul' that the trappings of power, wealth, and 'Fama' characteristically bring. The familiar association of this last, popular approval, with the wind then leads to the first mention of the sea and its squalls, by means of a tacit shift between compresent strands of association contained within that single image—a tactic which the Augustinian frequently exploits to ease such transitions between stanzas.⁸ Instead of such tempests, the narrator wishes for a calm repose, the site of which we take to be the *huerto* that caps this description. These two images, of the restful garden with the table and shade it contains on the one hand, and the stormy sea and its travellers on the other, then stand in tension, and dominate the poem until its close. The relationship between these two sets of images is vital, yet they are often treated in isolation; in what follows I offer an analysis of these images in context, both in terms of their interaction within this poem, and as regards their Horatian antecedents.

⁸As regards possible sources for the present poem, it may be significant that the association of wind with popular approval may be found in the influential *Phaedra* passage, as well as in Horace's *Odes* (see *Phaedra* 488: 'non aura populi [sc. illum inflammat]' [the wind of the people does not (inflammate him)]; Horace, *C* 3.2.20: 'arbitrio popularis aerae' ['by the wind of popular opinion']). The association is a common one, however, which would be natural in any case, and is familiar from a variety of sources, including from emblematic tradition: see Alciatus, *Emblema* LIII 'In adulatorem'.

Discussion of the *huerto* has focused on the question of whether the garden is real or symbolic, before specifying the exact place or metaphorical value involved. The most common geographical identification is with La Flecha, the Augustinian estate on the outskirts of Salamanca (Ramajo Caño, 2006: 518; Cuevas, 2001: 87). This seems fairly secure: the description in the poem's central stanzas shares various elements—such as the stream running down through the garden, the trees, and the emphasis on shade—with Fray Luis's famous lines at the opening of *De los nombres de Cristo*, and the link between the two passages is often drawn. It is true to say, as Terence O'Reilly has pointed out (1995: 11), that both descriptions are influenced by the topos of the *locus amoenus*, and we certainly cannot take 'por mi mano plantado' (l. 42) too literally on Fray Luis's part; however, this line will instead fit symbolically into the ethical reading I outline later, and the suggestion it carries of referring to the poet's own, real retreat will also strengthen the parallel with Horace's situation, here. While we should be wary of overstating its relevance, I thus take La Flecha to be the most likely literal referent, and to be in Fray Luis's mind.

The metaphorical value to be inferred has met with less consensus, but is often ascribed a religious significance, as suggestions (which we might not consider mutually exclusive) include the *hortus conclusus* (Thompson 2014, 76–7 n. 7), the Garden of Eden (Thompson, 1996), or Senabre's garden of faith, whence to seek the hidden path of *teología escondida* that leads to mystic union with God, as symbolized by the summit of the mountain on whose side the garden stands (1998: 35–36, drawing on the symbolic meaning of 'monte' in *De los nombres de Cristo*). Such accounts help explain the note of longing that sounds so clearly in the poem, heard, for example, in the repeated use of 'quiero' (ll. 27–37), or the frequent optatives, which imply that this retreat is still something the poet desires, and not something he has securely attained, even by its close ('tendido yo a la sombra esté cantando', l. 80). However, though these useful parallels must surely have occurred to Fray Luis, there remains a need to account for the contrast with the sea and the shipwreck, which, as O'Reilly has shown, replaces the more familiar city/countryside contrast in this poem, as the garden comes to represent 'the state of being to which he [the narrator] feels drawn', whatever we may

take that to be, and the sea the corresponding state he would abandon (1995: 14). O'Reilly suggests there the relevance of the *paradisus anima* tradition, often associated precisely with a cultivated garden (1995: 10–11); the seafaring to which it is opposed may then, as often, be ascribed a moral value, by its association with the corruption that undermined the mythical Golden Age. This myth is certainly relevant, and seafaring is often claimed to be incompatible with the Golden Age, to which country life is implicitly compared in various poems on the 'Beatus ille' theme.⁹ A possible complication arises, however, in that the Golden Age is usually portrayed as a time when agriculture was uninvented and unnecessary, when the earth offered its fruits of its own accord.¹⁰ In that case, no human hand would be needed to plant the seeds, and so the narrator's claim to have planted the garden himself once again rings discordant. Moreover, nature produces in Horace's poem 'dapes inemptas' for the table: they may be unbought, but these are still feasts—hardly the obvious fare of the 'pobrecilla mesa', whose poverty may have quite different implications. We may not yet, then, have the full story.

Furthermore, the literal and figurative interpretations of the *huerto* are often treated as separate options, but this is surely a false dichotomy: Colin Thompson (1988: 25) is right to maintain that Fray Luis having a real garden in mind does not prevent the image also having metaphorical significance. Indeed, we might expect the image to work on both levels: Woodward's analysis of the

⁹ For this incompatibility, see, for example, Virgil's prophecy of a return of the Golden Age, in which mercantile seafaring will cease: 'cedet et ipse mari vector nec nautica pinus | mutabit merces; omnis feret omnia tellus' [even the sailor will yield to the sea, and the water-borne pine will not exchange goods; all earth will bring forth all things] (*Eclogue* 4.38–39). Also relevant here is Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.94–96: 'nondum caesa suis, peregrinum ut viseret orbem, | montibus in liquidas pinus descenderat undas, | nullaue mortales praeter sua litora norant' [no pine had yet been felled on its high mountains, and come down to the water and the waves to see the exotic world, and men knew no shores but their own].

¹⁰ See, for example, Virgil, *Georgics* 2.500–01, 'quos rami fructus, quos ipsa volentia rura | sponte tulere sua, carpsit' [he gathers the fruits which the boughs, and which the fields themselves have willingly and spontaneously produced]; Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 5.937–38 'quod sol atque imbres dederant, quod terra crearat | sponte sua, satis id placabat pectora donum' [what sun and rains had given, and what the earth had produced of its own accord, that was a gift that was pleasing enough to their minds]; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.101–04: 'ipsa quoque immunis rastroke intacta nec ullis | saucia vomeribus per se dabat omnia tellus, | contentique cibus nullo cogente creatis | arbuteos fetus montanaque fraga legebant' [and earth untouched by the plough and unwounded by the hoe, of itself gave forth all things, and men were content with the food that was produced without anyone's instigation, and gathered arbutus fruits and mountain strawberries]. (My emphasis throughout.)

‘senda’ established long ago that polyvalent images are an important part of Fray Luis’s poetic armoury (1954: 17–21). Moreover, this approach to the *huerto* is suggested by what seems an important, but often overlooked, Horatian precedent. Horace too had his retreat on the outskirts of the city: his small Sabine farm. This was a real place, a gift from his patron Maecenas; however, it also takes on an ethical meaning in his poems, as his simple lifestyle there, living content on a little, is often presented as a source of inner tranquillity: the farm embodies ‘his own ideas of *ataraxia*’ (West, 1998: 116), and is often contrasted with the efforts of the greedy in their perilous, and self-defeating, search for wealth.

This, for example, is the force of the imagery in C 3.1, a poem linked to ‘Vida retirada’ by Antonio Ramajo Caño (1994: 108) on the grounds of precisely this moral contrast between the material desires of others and the wise narrator’s own content with a sufficiency.¹¹ The essential line for the poem’s moral force stands, typically, at the centre of Horace’s ode:

desiderantem quod satis est neque
tumultuosum sollicitat mare (ll. 25–26)

[‘The man who wants enough and no more
is not disturbed by stormy seas’]

The poet has moderated his desires: he is happy to live at ease on the farm’s simple produce, and that is the key to his *ataraxia*. Suggestively for a comparison with Fray Luis’s poem, the counterpoint to the poet’s contentment is immediately presented using sea imagery; that contrast is then developed in the second part of the poem, which focuses on the troubles of those who go to great effort to obtain vintage wines and imported luxuries, but are never content, and can never attain the

¹¹ A further parallel here, as he notes, is the presentation of the farm as a retreat that allows Horace to keep free of the mob, which strengthens the link with Fray Luis’s *huerto*; this, however, is a frequent feature of the picture Horace paints of his farm, and need not refer specifically to this poem. See also, for example, C 2.16.37–40, which shows Horace enjoying this freedom through his farm and the Muses—exactly the desire of Fray Luis at the close of his poem (ll. 80–85): ‘mihi parva rura [i.e. the farm] et | spiritum Graiae tenuem Camenae | Parca non mendax dedit et malignum | spernere vulgus’ [‘To me, Fate, the untreachorous, | has given a small farm and the modest breath | of a Greek Camena (i.e. muse), and has allowed me to despise | the malice of the mob’].

poet's prized tranquillity. In his closing lines, Horace presents the Sabine farm as the emblem of his undisturbed content; he would not exchange it for the luxuries others chase, because that chase destroys the *ataraxia* which he thinks the highest good: 'cur valle permutem Sabina | divitias operosiores?' ['Why should I give up my Sabine farm | for riches which bring more labour?'] (C 3.1.47–48). In presenting an image of a country retreat with both geographical and metaphorical significance, then, Fray Luis is following the familiar practice of Horace. What remains is to be more precise about the nature of this metaphorical significance in the Salamancan's poem. A way into this may be offered by consideration of the meaning of the sea imagery, with which the retreat is contrasted.

Studies of maritime imagery in Fray Luis's poems have drawn attention to the frequent contrast between the power of the sea and the comparative frailty of mankind (see Susan Hill Connor, 1980: 39–40). Where this is developed, it is usually in terms of uncertainty, as the stormy sea is seen to evoke the precariousness of human affairs, or, with Rivers, the 'inestable camino de la codicia comercial' (1981: 316). This last reference to commercial greed brings us closer to the full truth, as Fray Luis again grounds his image in Horace's frequent practice. The cardinal section of the Leonine poem comes at ll. 61–70; though the possible models that have been suggested for these lines are legion, the immediate source is surely Horatian:

non est meum, si mugiat Africis
malus procellis, ad miseras preces
decurrere et votis pacisci
ne Cypriae Tyriaeque merces
addant avaro divitias mari. (C 3.29.57–61)

['It is not my way, if the mast groans
in African gales, to take to pleading and praying
and bargaining with the gods to keep
my Cyprian or Tyrian cargo
from adding riches to the greedy sea.']

The verbal echoes which bind the two passages are clear: ‘non est meum’ is picked up by ‘*no es mío* ver el lloro’ (l. 63; my emphasis); the ‘African’ winds are Fray Luis’s ‘ábrego’ (l. 65); Horace’s groaning mast may be heard again in ‘La combatida antena | cruje’ (ll. 66–67); ‘enriquecen’ (l. 70) reflects the exotic riches that Horace’s stricken sailors fear will be lost to the custody of the sea if theirs is the next ship it wrecks. Again, then, we see the power of the sea and the tempest, and man’s impotence before its capricious changes. The key to the correspondence, however, is ‘*avaro*’: elegantly here transferred to the sea is the characteristic that drives men to take the excessive risk of sailing when they should know better, in thrall to a greedy desire for material gain. Moreover, this is far from an isolated case; rather, across Horace’s *Odes*, as Rivers has noted, ‘maritime commerce is the primary example, and symbol, of avarice’, and ‘disrupts the philosopher’s search for *ataraxia*’ (1983: 52). It is a link established in the opening poem of the collection:

luctantem Icaris fluctibus Africum
mercator metuens otium et oppidi
laudat rura sui; mox reficit ratis
quassas, indocilis pauperiem pati. (C 1.1.15–18)

[‘the merchant, afraid of the African gale brawling
with Icarian waves, praises leisure and the countryside
round his own home town, but soon rebuilds his shattered
ships—he cannot learn to endure poverty’]

These lines are rich indeed. The scorned sailor is often a merchant, the greedy *nouveau-riche* who will do anything to get ahead. While he speaks a paeon to the countryside near his home, and seems to fear, as he should, those powerful African winds that cause such trouble in C 3.29, the juxtaposition ‘*metuens otium*’ gives him away, foreshadowing his quick departure, as he itches to leave this *otium* and sail after wealth. That this desire for gain is excessive is suggested by the reference to Icarus, whose own death was caused precisely by his failure to temper his desires as the poet-resident of the Sabine farm will. However, even this cautionary tale—recalling specifically, in the waves of ‘*Icaris fluctibus*’, the moment of Icarus’s death—allied to the stark reminder of the

ships pitilessly crushed by the storms, is not enough to dissuade the merchant. A proper response to the sea's dangers would be to avoid them, content with the sufficiency already possessed: that is why the wise man of the Sabine valley in *C* 3.1 is not troubled by the sea—because his desires are proportionate. Horace's poems, then, feature a frequent opposition between the turbulent greed of the seafarer and the modest tranquillity of the poet who lives happily on his Sabine farm. This is the nexus of symbolism that Fray Luis inherits when he borrows the image from *C* 3.29—a poem which suggestively constitutes Horace's invitation to Maecenas to join him in his own, Sabine retreat—and the overtones of that symbolism are clearly present in his verse: witness most clearly the opening of poem V, where the first example of greed is, significantly, a Portuguese trading ship.¹² This, I submit, is how we ought to read the sea imagery in 'Vida retirada', too.

This, then, is the picture of Horatian imitation that emerges. The detailed reminiscence of *C* 3.29 is important, but the Augustinian also inherits a nexus of related imagery that opposes the excessive greed of the sea-traveller to the freedom from care enjoyed by the man of moderate desires who dwells content in his retreat. Thus, for Horace, the retreat is both a real place and a literary one. Fray Luis, following in the tracks of his Roman forebear, would naturally be led to add a parallel symbolic facet to his equivalent real-life retreat: the Augustinian's *huerto*, while linked to the real retreat at La Flecha, is a calque of the Sabine farm. The moral force of his poem's central image then becomes a call to moderation, to temper those excessive desires that tempt man to overstep his bounds and lead to the disasters of the shipwreck, and this moderation is the method by which that longed-for, tranquil repose might be achieved. However, this ethical kernel is unmistakably couched in the terms of pagan morality: in addition to the parallel of the Horatian farm, the half of the poem leading up to the *huerto* is full of hints at Stoic ideas (though we should not apply the label too rigidly to Fray Luis and Horace themselves). In the context of the 'senda' of the opening stanza, the 'pocos sabios' may well hint at the Stoic *sapiens* who chooses the hard, but correct, path of

¹² 'En vano el mar fatiga | la vela portuguesa; que ni el seno | de Persia ni la amiga | Maluca da árbol bueno, | que pueda hacer un ánimo sereno.'

virtue, here ‘pocos’ because of the Stoics’ famous reticence to grant that anyone had fully achieved this. Furthermore, ‘Que no le enturbia el pecho’ (l. 6) and the repeated ‘cura’ (ll. 11, 13) both suggest the desired tranquillity that is the poem’s touchstone; ‘ajeno arbitrio’ (l. 35) recalls the Stoic commitment to scorn ‘externals’, living instead the interior life depicted in ‘Vivir quiero conmigo’ (l. 36); and ll. 39–40 suggest the goal of *apatheia*, of not being subject to the effects of strong emotions. It is in this light that we might explain the narrator’s own planting of the *huerto*, which earlier gave problems: it fits neatly into this moral, Stoic context, suggesting the virtue of autarky.¹³

The success of this moral approach is virtually guaranteed within the poem: l. 45 already sees it ‘muestra en esperanza el fruto cierto’, a striking claim for any human virtue; though it is worth noting that this is also a feature of the Sabine farm, with its ‘segetis certa fides’ [‘secure harvest’] at C 3.16.30, another poem dominated by the theme of greed. However, this is not the whole story, as the stream that comes rushing down is still needed to ‘acrecentar su hermosura’, and despite the promised fruit and the spring blooms of l. 44, it is the stream that clothes the ground in green, ‘y con diversas flores va esparciendo’ (ll. 53–55). The exact relationship between the planted garden, with the kind of virtue it represents, and the stream, is elusive; but it is tempting to think, as O’Reilly has suggested (1995: 13), that with the coming of this water we begin to see ‘a process in which human effort and divine grace interact’, as the water flows into the garden from outside, from the mountain’s summit. This ability to assimilate his classical forebears to his own, Christian position is typical of Fray Luis more widely; however, whether or not this is accepted, the earlier image of the stormy sea has been quelled, as the poem moves on to a beautiful, flowing

¹³ It has become commonplace to explain this claim by quoting a similar statement in Cicero, *Cato Maior de Senectute* XVII.59, but it is worth noting that the emphasis on self-sufficiency in that text fits well with the ethical reading offered here, and indeed that the passage might naturally occur to Fray Luis, as it follows almost immediately the section of Cicero quoted so often by the commentators on Horace’s ‘Beatus ille’ (see n. 5, above). Tibullus, *Elegy* 1.1.7–8 is often noted alongside the Ciceronian passage, but for ethical parallels between that poem and the ‘Vida retirada’ which might bring this reference in line with the present reading, too, see n. 17, below. (The relevant section of the Ciceronian text reads: ‘Atqui ego ista sum omnia dimensus, mei sunt ordines, mea descriptio; multae etiam istarum arborum mea manu sunt satae’ [But I it was who measured all these out, mine are the rows and mine is the arrangement; and many of those trees were planted by my hand].)

stream, a more positive image of water than we have seen thus far. The terms of the description here, however, demand further comment: this positive stream running through the virtuous garden is surprisingly described as ‘codiciosa’, which combines with ‘acrecentar’ to give a prominent place within the garden to the lexis of mercantile greed that it is supposed to stand against.¹⁴ However, re-using vocabulary in unexpected contexts and with different meanings is a piece of linguistic bravura in which Fray Luis indulges elsewhere in this poem: we might compare the Stoic ‘pocos sabios’ of l. 5 and the ‘sabio moro’ of l. 10, the latter in the context of ostentatious wealth that ought to be scorned. Moreover, there is no question of the harmful greed seen elsewhere in the poem actually entering the garden, here: the spring remains unequivocally a positive, peaceful image, as words which elsewhere might indicate the desperate, pernicious cupidity exemplified in the shipwreck are stripped of that meaning when applied to a feature of the cultivated garden, so complete is the victory of the simple sufficiency which the garden has been seen to represent.

After the poem then lurches back out to the rough waters of a shipwreck in the lines treated earlier, a similar opposition is repeated at ll. 71–75 between the seafarer and the narrator, content with his poor table. Here, the poverty of the ‘pobrecilla mesa’ does not imply that it is bare; rather, it may well derive from the poverty linked with virtue in C 3.29, in the lines immediately preceding those on the shipwreck.¹⁵ However, as is again frequent in Horace’s *Odes*, *pauperies* does not refer to penury, but rather to modest means, a better fit for the affectionate diminutive, ‘pobrecilla’.¹⁶ These lines, then, convey a scorn of needless, ostentatious wealth, the ‘vajilla | de fino oro labrada’ (ll. 73–74) that again is left for the seafarer, who feels no fear of the sea—unwisely forgetting its wrath, a forgetfulness imitated in the versification, as the delayed epithet ‘airada’ only belatedly

¹⁴ I am grateful here to Stephen Boyd for pointing out the extent of this mercantile lexis when this paper was first read.

¹⁵ See C 3.29.54–56: ‘mea | virtute me involvo probamque | pauperiem sine dote quaero’ [‘I wrap myself | in my virtue and look for honest Poverty, | asking no dowry’].

¹⁶ Cf. Nisbet and Rudd (2004: 23), *ad* C 3.2.1, ‘Angustam amice pauperiem pati’.

reveals the sea's true nature. The table is thus an extension of the ideas we have already seen applied to the *huerto*, in which extension Fray Luis is again following his Roman predecessor:

vivitur parvo bene, cui paternum
splendet in *mensa tenui* salinum
nec levis somnos timor aut cupido
sordidus aufert. (C 2.16.13–16; my emphasis)¹⁷

[‘A man lives well on a little if his father’s salt-cellar
shines on his modest table,
and if fear and sordid desires do not disturb
his easy sleep.’]

‘vivitur parvo bene’: this is the crux of the moralizing imagery that Fray Luis takes over from Horace, the retreat symbolically showing the way to achieve the inner peace desired in the early part of the poem by the sailor caught at sea.¹⁸ Furthermore, this sense of *ataraxia* or *apatheia* is surely partly behind the ‘paz’ with which Fray Luis’s table is ‘bien abastada’ (l. 72).¹⁹ Once again, then, the peaceful table is a counterweight to the excessive desires of the sailors, and it is by moderating those desires to fit the modest means of its Horatian-conceived ‘poverty’ that this inner tranquillity is successfully achieved. As in poem V, the image of the water and its thematic link with greed then

¹⁷ This is not a case of direct imitation along the lines of the shipwreck passage treated above: the image recurs in Horace, and I give these lines as a typical example of his treatment of it, which clearly ties the image to the ethical approach here outlined. However it is worth noting that there is again a similar example in C 3.29, which has been so central to Fray Luis’s poem: ‘mundaeque parvo sub lare pauperum | cenae’ [‘and wholesome suppers under the little god | of a poor man’s home’] (ll. 14–15). Alternatively, Tibullus’s influence may plausibly be felt here: see Sarmiento (1970: 23) on *Elegy* 1.1.37–38, ‘adsitis, diui, neu uos e paupere mensa | dona nec e puris spernite fictilibus’ [Be present, gods, and do not scorn gifts that come from a poor table, and from plain earthenware]. However, this additional parallel ought not to weaken the case advanced here: we have seen how Tibullus’s poem might be readily suggested by its links to ‘Beatus ille’ and that tradition of writing *de laudibus vitae rusticae*; moreover, Tibullan formulations of the morality exemplified by country life suggest a further level of correspondence relevant to the present reading of ‘Vida retirada’, as such ideas as ‘contentus uiuere paruo’ [live content with a little] (l. 25) and ‘parua seges satis est’ [a small crop is enough] (l. 43) chime well with the Horatian call to be content with a sufficiency that is reflected in Fray Luis’s ode.

¹⁸ ‘Otium diuos rogat in patenti | prensus Aegaeo’ [‘The man caught in the open Aegean asks the gods | for peace of mind’] (C 2.16.1–2); West (1998: 114) indicates that ‘otium’ functions as a translation of ‘ataraxia’, here.

¹⁹ Compare the blessed freedom from difficult passions in Garcilaso, *Elegía* 1.289–90: ‘¡Oh bienaventurado, que, sin ira, | sin odio, en paz estás, sin amor ciego’.

carry us into ll. 76–80 and the image of thirst, and the epithet ‘insaciāble’ is significant: if the thirst cannot be slaked, then those ‘otros’ with dropsy for power will never find the content on which this poem turns; the only solution is to temper that desire, and limit it to the now-familiar, achievable sufficiency. It is this successful moderation of desire that brings the contraposed content which the narrator would aspire to enjoy at the close of the poem, lying at his ease in the shade of a garden whose Horatian roots have allowed it to embody precisely that virtue.²⁰

²⁰ I owe a great debt to Jonathan Thacker, who has read and improved several drafts of this article. I am also very grateful to Terence O’Reilly and Colin Thompson, for their kind advice and their example, and to Oliver Noble Wood, Peter Such, and the audience at the AHGBI Conference in Oxford in March 2013, at which this was first read, from whose comments it has further benefitted.

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